

Hmong Language, Culture and Learning

Saturdays 2/3, 3/3, and 4/14 and Thursday 4/28*

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Room:

Times: 8-4:15

Nyob zoo. Hmong Language, Culture and Learning is a course designed to familiarize educators and others with the language, culture and educational issues relevant to Hmong people in Wisconsin and the United States. Areas of exploration will include the nature of Hmong language, Hmong history, the traditional family and clan structure, child-rearing mores, healing practices, marriage and funeral practices, and educational beliefs and practices. Contemporary developments and adjustment issues within the Hmong communities will be discussed, especially school achievements and challenges, intergenerational conflicts, youth gangs, and the need to provide high expectations and supportive educational environments for Hmong children, youth and families.

Course Objectives:

1. Through classroom discussions, research, presentations, and written assignments, students will demonstrate the following knowledge, performances and dispositions:
 - Knowledge of the historical relationship between the Hmong people and the U.S.
 - Knowledge of the Hmong journey from Laos to the United States
 - Knowledge of and respect for Hmong history, culture, and religion
 - Knowledge of and respect for the multiple challenges facing Hmong children and their families in America
 - Demonstrated ability to utilize techniques that can assist teachers in providing successful learning experiences for Hmong students
 - Demonstrated ability to utilize strategies that can help educators and community leaders to assist the Hmong to become full partners in the U.S. society while preserving important aspects of their culture
2. Through participation in language lessons, computer-assisted learning, and community-based research, students will develop basic oral and written communication skills in the Hmong language and demonstrate ability to utilize Hmong-English bilingual materials and books in classroom settings

Course Requirements:

Participation (10%). Active participation in discussion, respect for one's colleagues and one's surroundings, and regular attendance is expected.

Listserv Responses (20%). You will submit weekly responses to course readings (total of 10) during the length of the course; and comment, as needed, on responses of classmates.

Book Reviews (10%). You will each complete a book review (2-3 pages) of one of the additional texts about the Hmong. Remember that these are reviews, not summaries: You can address highlights, ask questions, provide a critique, etc.

Language Assessment (20%). As part of this course you will receive approximately 15 hours of Hmong language instruction. Your language learning will be assessed three times during the semester through authentic language assessment. You will be expected to:

- give, and respond to, basic greetings (oral)
- make, and respond to, invitations (oral)
- ask, and answer about, one's family (oral)
- give, and respond to, basic classroom directions (oral)
- create a family tree (writing)
- read aloud a basic Hmong story (reading/oral)
- write, and read, a letter to friend (writing/reading)

**Note: Native speakers of Hmong will be assessed on their production of Hmong language materials, such as in the following example:*

- write, illustrate, and perform children's stories (writing, oral)

Hmong Curriculum/In-Service Project (40%).

Prepare a grade level curricular unit about the history and culture of the Hmong. This thematic unit should involve social studies, language arts, art, music, and other subject areas as needed. This unit should be approximately 10 pages in length, including an introduction, list of objectives, sample lesson plans, and a list of references/resources.

- a. Your unit should begin with a 2-page narrative on the necessity of such a unit for all children. This narrative should draw from and specifically reference course readings, including essays from our coursepack and from *Bamboo Among the Oaks*, as well as Hmong cultural materials you gather from the St. Paul experience.
- b. Your unit should contain daily themes with stories, discussion, and hands-on activities. I suggest using folktales from Folk stories of the Hmong and incorporating discussions and activities to accompany those stories. Children's books about the refugee experiences (*Dia's Storycloth*, *A Boy Named Chong*, etc.) could also work.

OR

Prepare a narrative description (3 pages) and additional materials (approximately 10 pages) for a 1 hour inservice you would give to fellow teachers to help them better understand Hmong students and families. Focus can be on a variety of issues, including history, acculturation to America, religion, gender, generational issues, and education. Remember, the best inservices are interactive!!! Please provide references.

Evaluation:

A	94-100
A/B	88-93
B	82-87
B/C	77-81
C	72-76
C/D	68-71
D	63-67
F	0--62

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Moua, Mai Neng (ed.)(2002). *Bamboo Among the Oaks: Contemporary Writing by Hmong Americans*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press.

Faderman (1998). *I begin My Life All Over*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Vang, Txerthov, Hmong language booklets with audiotape and videotape (to be provided in class).

Articles on e-reserve at Polk Library (<http://eres.uwosh.edu/eres/>)

Schedule:

Feb 3 **Introductions. Language Lesson 1; Hmong History and Culture until the 1960s; America's Secret War.**

Readings: *Bamboo Among the Oaks*, Introduction, Kou Lor's Slices with a Hmong Knife; : Bee Cha's Being Hmong is not Enough; Vayong Moua's The Hmong Wall, The Shadow that Loved; Moua's Along the Way to the Mekong, DC, Father Died 25 years Ago; Ka Vang's Yellow Man's Burden; ***Video Being Hmong Means Being Free***

Mar 3 **Life in the Refugee Camps/ Life in America; Religion and the Hmong Language lesson 2; Language Assessment 1.**

Reading: *The last bus*, *The word* (e-reserve); *Bamboo*: Bryan Thao Warra's The True Tale of Yer, Last War Poem, Wisdom; Mayli Vang's Dreams of a Forgotten Widow, Some Old Hmong Women, We Women, Reflections of My Father; Ka Vang's REM & Dab & Neeg & Dab Neeg; Naly Yang's Spirit Trails; So Choj Vang's Chino, Letter from Dragon River, Immunization, Retired, The American; Ka Vang's Twinkies, Extraordinary Hmong; Peter Yang's Mother's Day, My Dad the Mekong and Me the Mississippi; Faderman Part I and II
Video: Split Horns.

April 14 **Language, Culture and Education Institute (with presentations relevant to Hmong culture and education). Language Assessment 2 (family trees).**

Reading: *Bamboo*: True Hang's A Good Hmong Woman; Kao Yong Vang's Is the Beauty Queen a Real Woman?; Va Megn Thoj's Hmoob Boy Meets Hmong Girl; Kao Xiong & Dia Cha's The Lovers; Moua's Life in 4 Chapters, Mother is a Coffee Table, Endstage; Hawj Xiong, The Last Walk. Timm, (e-reserve).

April 28 **Tentative. (possible visit to Hmong American Peace Academy, if interest). Language Assessment 3 (books).**

May 11 **All assignments due**

Additional Texts about the Hmong

- Chang, K. and S. Pinkel (1993). *Kou Chang's Story: The Journey of a Laotian Hmong Refugee Family*. Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press.
- Conquergood, D. (1989). *I Am a Shaman: A Hmong Life Story with Ethnographic Commentary*. Minneapolis, MN: Southeast Asian Refugee Studies.
- Faderman, L. (1998). *I Begin My Life All Over: The Hmong and the American Immigrant Experience*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Fadiman, A. (1997). *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Hamilton-Merritt, J. (1993). *Tragic Mountains: The Hmong, The Americans, and the Secret Wars for Laos, 1942-1992*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hein, J. (1995). *From Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia: A Refugee Experience in the United States*. New York: Twayne.
- Hmong Youth Cultural Awareness Project (1994). *A Free People: Our Stories, Our Voices, Our Dreams*. Minneapolis, MN: Hmong Youth Cultural Awareness Project.
- Hones, D. & Cha, S. (1999). *Educating New Americans: Immigrant Lives and Learning*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Mattison, W., Lo, L., & T. Scarseth (1994). *Hmong Lives From Laos to La Crosse*. La Crosse, WI: The Pump House.
- Moore, D. (1989). *Dark Sky, Dark Land: Stories of the Hmong Boy Scouts of Troop 100*. Eden Prairie, MN: Tessera Publishing.
- Pfaff, T. (1995). *Hmong in America: Journey from a Secret War*. Eau Claire, WI: Chippewa Valley Museum Press.
- Quincy, K. (2000). *Harvesting Pa Chay's Wheat: The Hmong & America's Secret War in Laos*. Spokane, WA: Eastern Washington University Press.
- Smalley, W., Vang, C.K., & G.Y. Yang (1990). *Mother of Writing: The Origin and Development of a Hmong Messianic Script*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Thao, P. (1999). *Mong Education at the Crossroads*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Vang, L. and J. Lewis (1990). *Grandmother's Path, Grandfather's Way: Oral Lore, Generation to Generation*. Rancho Cordova, CA: Vang & Lewis.

Walker-Moffat, W. (1995). *The Other Side of the Asian American Success Story*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.